

CLAIMS

1. A vehicle seat comprising:

a lower seat portion;

5 a back portion;

wherein the lower seat portion and the back portion are formed from at least one panel by a method selected from the group consisting of quick plastic forming, superplastic forming and sheet hydro-forming; and

10 wherein the lower seat portion and the back portion are cooperatively configured to form a seat frame.

2. The vehicle seat of claim 1, wherein said at least one panel is a unitary, one-piece panel.

3. The vehicle seat of claim 1, wherein said at least one panel includes a first, unitary, one-piece panel and a second, unitary, one-piece panel, wherein the lower seat portion is formed from the first, unitary, one-piece panel, and wherein the back portion is formed from the second, unitary, one-piece panel.

4. The vehicle seat of claim 1, wherein the lower seat portion has a lower seat bottom panel portion and a matable lower seat top panel portion, and wherein the back portion has a back bottom panel portion and a matable back top panel portion.

5. The vehicle seat of claim 4, wherein said at least one panel includes a first, unitary, one-piece panel and a second, unitary, one-piece panel, wherein the lower seat bottom panel portion and the lower seat top panel portion are formed from the first, unitary, one-piece panel, and wherein the back bottom panel portion and the back top panel portion are formed from the second, unitary, one-piece panel.

6. The vehicle seat of claim 5, wherein the first, unitary, one-piece panel is characterized by first bend, wherein the lower seat bottom panel portion is at a first side of the first bend and the lower seat top panel portion is at a second side of the first bend, wherein the second, unitary, one-piece panel is characterized by a second bend, and wherein the back bottom panel portion is at a first side of the second bend and the back top panel portion is at a second side of the second bend.

7. The vehicle seat of claim 4, wherein said at least one panel includes a first, unitary, one-piece panel and a second, unitary, one-piece panel, wherein the lower seat bottom panel portion and the back bottom panel portion are formed from the first, unitary, one-piece panel, and wherein the lower seat top panel portion and the back top panel portion are formed from the second, unitary, one-piece panel.

8. The vehicle seat of claim 7, wherein the first, unitary, one-piece panel is characterized by a first bend, wherein the lower seat bottom panel portion is at a first side of the first bend and the back bottom panel portion is at a second side of the first bend, wherein the second, unitary, one-piece panel is characterized by a second bend, and wherein the lower seat top panel portion is at a first side of the second bend and the back top panel portion is at a second side of the second bend.

9. The vehicle seat of claim 4, wherein said at least one panel is a unitary, one-piece panel;

wherein the unitary, one-piece panel is characterized by a first bend,  
5 wherein the lower seat top panel portion is on a first side of the first bend and the back top panel portion is on a second side of the first bend;

wherein the unitary, one-piece panel is further characterized by a second bend, wherein the lower seat bottom panel portion is on a first side of the second bend  
10 and the lower seat top panel portion is on a second side of the second bend;

wherein the unitary, one-piece panel is further characterized by a third bend; and

15 wherein the back top panel portion is on a first side of the third bend and the back bottom panel portion is on a second side of the third bend.

10. The vehicle seat of claim 1, wherein the seat frame is mountable with respect to a vehicle such that the seat frame is rigidly attached with respect to the vehicle.

11. The vehicle seat of claim 1, wherein the seat frame is matable with a seat track member, wherein the seat track member is matable with respect to a vehicle, and wherein the seat frame is movable along the seat track member relative to the vehicle.

12. The vehicle seat of claim 1, wherein the lower seat portion and the back portion are operably connectable to a pivot linkage such that the back portion is pivotable relative to the lower seat portion.

13. The vehicle seat of claim 1, wherein one of the lower seat portion and the back portion is adapted to receive a seat cushion.

14. The vehicle seat of claim 1, wherein the back portion is adapted to receive a headrest.

15. The vehicle seat of claim 1, wherein the back portion is formed with a headrest portion.

16. The vehicle seat of claim 1, wherein one of the lower seat portion and the back portion is formed with an integral flange, and wherein said integral flange is connectable with respect to the other of the lower seat portion and the back portion to at least partially join said one with respect to said other.

17. A method of manufacturing a vehicle seat, the method comprising:

forming a unitary, one-piece panel by a method selected from a group  
5 consisting of quick plastic forming, superplastic forming and sheet hydroforming,  
wherein the unitary, one-piece panel has a first portion formed as a lower seat portion and a second portion formed as a back portion, wherein the lower seat portion has a lower seat bottom panel portion and a lower seat top panel portion, and wherein the back portion has a back bottom panel portion and a back top panel portion.

18. The method of claim 17, further comprising:

bending the unitary, one-piece panel between the first portion and the second portion;

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bending the unitary, one-piece panel between the lower seat bottom panel portion and the lower seat top panel portion; and

bending the unitary, one-piece panel between the back bottom panel portion and the back top panel portion.

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19. The method of Claim 17, further comprising joining the first portion and the second portion to one another to form a seat frame.

20. The method of claim 17, further comprising providing the formed panel as a seat frame.

21. A vehicle seat comprising:

a lower seat portion;

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a back portion;

wherein the lower seat portion has a lower seat bottom panel portion and a matable lower seat top panel portion, wherein the back portion has a back bottom panel portion and a matable back top panel portion;

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wherein the lower seat bottom panel portion, the lower seat top panel portion, the back bottom panel portion and the back top panel portion are formed from a unitary, one-piece panel;

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wherein the lower seat portion and the back portion are formed by quick plastic forming; and

wherein the lower seat portion and the back portion are cooperatively configured to form a seat frame.